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Bulletin #41: Press: China Responds to Top-Secret US Nuclear War Strategy

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China Responds to Top-Secret US Nuclear War Strategy

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4–5 minutes



China Displays Nuclear Ballistic Missiles. Military vehicles carrying DF-5B intercontinental ballistic missiles participate in a military parade at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on October 1, 2019, to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of China. GREG BAKER/AFP via Getty Images

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The Chinese on Wednesday accused the United States of creating the largest nuclear threat in the world after President [Joe Biden](#) reportedly approved redirection of U.S. deterrent strategy to focus on China.

Biden approved the updates to "Nuclear Employment Guidance" in March, *The New York Times* reported on Tuesday. It is a highly classified strategic document that is updated roughly every four years. Its revised version would focus on China's nuclear arsenal expansion for the first time.

"China is seriously concerned about the relevant report," said Mao Ning, spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, during a regular press conference. She added that Beijing maintained its nuclear arsenal at the minimum level required for national security, which was not at the same level as Washington.

China has never disclosed the size of its nuclear forces. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) says that the country's nuclear arsenal is the world's third largest with 500 warheads. The [U.S. military](#) estimated that China would probably have [over 1,000 nukes](#) by 2030.

Mao also accused the U.S. of being the "creator of the world's largest strategic risk of nuclear threat;" the country adhered to a deterrence policy based on the first-use of nuclear weapons while upgrading its nuclear triad and "openly" tailoring nuclear [deterrence strategies for its allies](#).

The nuclear triad refers to a three-pronged delivery structure that is composed of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles; submarine-launched ballistic missiles; and strategic bombers.

Chinese President [Xi Jinping](#) had ordered to "speed up" the development of the country's strategic deterrence forces. During his interview with [Elon Musk](#) last week, former President [Donald Trump](#) claimed that China would "[catch up, maybe even surpass](#)" the U.S. in terms of [nuclear weapons](#).

The SIPRI said that there were 9,585 nuclear warheads in military stockpiles for potential use among the nine nuclear-armed states. Russia and the U.S. possess 4,380 and 3,708, respectively. The U.S. government has also revealed that it had [3,748 nuclear warheads](#) as of last September.

"China pursues a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and adheres to a nuclear strategy of self-defense," Mao added. China has [proposed](#) that five nuclear-armed states, including France and the United Kingdom, make a deal or issue a statement on "mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons."

The spokesperson said that Beijing did not intend to engage in the nuclear arms race. However, the [Pentagon](#) reported last year that China pursued a selective qualitative parity with U.S. and Russian capabilities and continued to rapidly modernize, diversify, and expand its nuclear forces.

Meanwhile, [China has stopped talks with the U.S. on possible nuclear weapons limitations](#). Mao urged Washington to fulfill its "special and priority" responsibility for disarmament, including further reducing the size of its nuclear arsenal and abandoning nuclear alliances in Europe and Asia.

Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, said when China completed nuclear expansion, it would not meet or exceed those of the U.S. and Russia. Its overall stockpile would be one-third of those of Washington and Moscow.

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